

Magpie Geese flocking back to South East

For the first time since 2004, magpie geese are breeding in the state's south east.

Randall Johnson from the Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH) said magpie geese are returning to Bool and Hacks Lagoon in large numbers as a result of favourable weather conditions.

"Recent heavy rainfall has resulted in much needed water reaching Bool and Hacks Lagoon," he said.

"While the lagoons are not full, even low water levels have provided an important breeding opportunity for magpie geese, whose breeding habits are influenced by rainfall.

"Magpie geese have the outstanding ability to detect when conditions are suitable for breeding, and returned to the area within 24 hours of water reaching Hacks Lagoon.

"As a result, geese numbers have soared and we estimate that the bulk of the state's population, around 500, are now in Bool and Hacks Lagoon.

"We've come across nests with as many as sixteen eggs, which is an encouraging sign given the recent drought conditions experienced by much of south-eastern Australia.

"This is the only location in South Australia where magpie geese breed and it's the first time breeding activity has taken place since 2004.

"The successful reintroduction of magpie geese to this area was initiated by DEH Wetlands Officer Mike Harper in the 1980s.

"Their return to the site en masse and the level of breeding activity is a great success story, especially as this species is considered endangered in this state.

"The restoration of Picks Swamp south of Mount Gambier has also benefited the species, with up to 25 magpie geese regularly recorded at this location.

"The recent rainfall is also a boon for threatened species such as the southern bell frog, and two species of ibis and black swans that are also breeding here.

"Visitors can observe magpie geese from the Gunawar Lookout on Hacks Island, the Hacks Lagoon car park or Pat Om Boardwalk.

"The birds are very conspicuous, and vocal, and can be easily spotted from these locations."

For details on where to view magpie geese, contact DEH on (08) 8762 3412.

Media contact

Emily Holyoak

Media Officer, Department for Environment and Heritage

Phone 08 8463 7437

Mobile 0458 510 784

www.environment.sa.gov.au